

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**March 18, 1999**

### Projects Reviewed

Convened: 9:00am

Aquarium Master Plan Implementation  
BINMIC Neighborhood Plan,  
Wallingford Neighborhood Plan  
Downtown Wayfinding Demonstration Project,  
Public Restroom & Bus Shelter Improvements  
South Park, Freemont & Georgetown Neighborhood Plans

Adjourned: 1:00pm

### Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, chair  
Moe Batra  
Gail Dubrow  
Robert Foley  
Jeff Girvin  
Gerald Hansmire  
Peter Miller

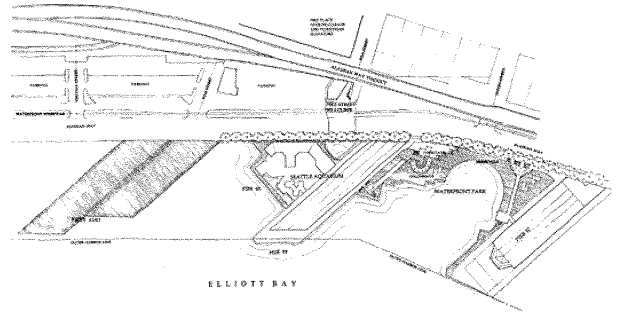
### Staff Present

Vanessa Murdock  
Peter Aylsworth  
Rebecca Walls

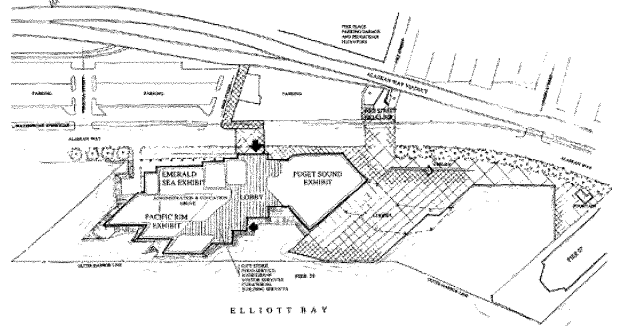
031899.1      Project: **Aquarium Master Plan Implementation**  
                  Phase: Briefing  
          Previous Review: March 6, 1997  
          Presenters: Cindi Shiota, Parks and Recreation  
                          Michael Woodland, Parks and Recreation  
          Attendees: Sandy Howard, Design, Construction & Land Use  
                  Time: .75 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00006)

The Seattle Aquarium Master Plan, completed in 1994, was the result of a two year effort to outline a vision for the Aquarium and adjacent Waterfront Park by the Central Waterfront Citizens Advisory Committee. A recent charrette resulted in no changes to the plan. Although a state-of-the-art facility when it opened in 1977, the Aquarium has fallen behind industry standards and has a growing list of serious deficiencies. While the city has spent significant funds on maintenance, the facility is expensive to maintain and some necessary maintenance projects have not been completed. The Aquarium's estimated major maintenance needs for the next eight years are approximately \$8 million. The unoccupied Piers 62 and 63 have short-term maintenance needs of nearly \$1 million with an annual piling inspection and design program estimated to be another \$200,000 per year. In addition to maintenance needs, the lack of funds has made it impossible to upgrade the animal collection of the original Aquarium. Although only 4% of the Aquarium's current operating budget requires a subsidy from the City of Seattle's General Fund, the physical plant is being neglected, new exhibits are not being funded, the facility is understaffed, and programs are being cut back.

The proposed Master Plan calls for a facility whose main goals are education and conservation, while providing an exciting venue to appreciate the rich aquatic environments of the Puget Sound region. To this end, three principle exhibit pavilions were proposed in the Master Plan; Puget Sound: Inland Sea; Pacific Rim: Emerald Sea and Pacific Rim Sampler. Animals will be housed in the exhibit that reflects their natural habitat. These are preliminary and the exhibits will be designed as planning proceeds. In addition, a new entry to the Aquarium is proposed, to establish a strong streetfront /waterfront presence that the current facility lacks. The cost of this redevelopment is estimated to be \$150 million dollars, with an additional \$30 million for improvements to the adjacent Waterfront Park. Substantive private funding of \$50 million is proposed for the facility. To meet this financial need, a new, non-profit governance structure for the Aquarium is proposed to take over management of the facility prior to construction.



Plan of existing conditions



Plan of proposed Master Plan



Entry lobby exhibit concept

**Discussion:**

- Dubrow:** Have alternative uses of Pier 59 been explored?
- Shiota:** The explored alternatives for Pier 59 include retaining and leasing out the existing pier shed, retaining the shell of the pier shed as covered open space for park functions, and complete removal of the shed for park open space. There is a strong desire within the community to continue the summer concert series. The pier shed could provide necessary shelter for such activities.
- Dubrow:** I encourage you to develop additional urban design guidelines that address the treatment of the historic resources, including the rhythm and character of the waterfront, as an important context for new development.
- Shiota:** There are elements in the design guidelines that include consideration of the historic context. We carefully thought about contextual issues when exploring various expansion options.
- Dubrow:** I don't see how the historic context has shaped the preferred scheme. The character of the waterfront south of pier 57 is a consistent row of pier sheds. One pier shed was removed from pier 61 in anticipation of the Aquarium expansion. I am concerned about losing another one and further weakening the cumulative visual impact of the historic waterfront.
- Shiota:** The loggia in the park space is not designed. This scheme shows a possible configuration that attempted to increase view opportunities.
- Hansmire:** I agree with Gail regarding the historic character of the waterfront. How are setback and view corridor requirements influencing the expansion?
- Shiota:** Maximizing views out toward the water is not based on code requirements. We plan to have a perimeter boardwalk around the facility that is open to the public.
- Hansmire:** How do the overwater coverage requirements effect the preferred alternative?
- Shiota:** That is one of the reasons we decided to expand to the north, the overwater coverage requirements are lower. Fish passage and ESA regulations will dictate much of the design decisions. As a major educational institution, the Aquarium can also help inform the public on salmon ESA issues.
- Dubrow:** What kinds of parking and connection issues have been identified with the Master Plan?
- Shiota:** Parking is always a major concern. There is currently no transit connections or "ride free" circulators that connect with the waterfront. We would like to have some east|west connections and circulator buses to reconnect the waterfront with the rest of downtown. We are working closely with the City's circulation planning efforts to resolve connection issues.
- Woodland:** Pine Street is a key east|west connection opportunity. We would like to improve connections through the Pike Place Market and the existing hillclimb.
- Batra:** Do you have a copy of the Osaka Aquarium design guidelines?
- Shiota:** Yes, but they are in Japanese. The Osaka Aquarium project was unique in that the entire waterfront was developed at the same time from a single Master Plan. There was an effort to enhance the waterfront nightlife through retail, a theater that serves the aquarium and shows movies at night, and other amenities.
- Foley:** How late will the Aquarium be open to the public?
- Shiota:** The Aquarium hours will probably be the same as they are now. It is open until 8:00pm in the summer and typically the larger spaces are rented out for private functions after closing.

**Dubrow:** I think the non-profit organization is a good form of administration for this facility. How will it effect the design review processes since this is such a public institution?

**Shiota:** The implementation plan recommends a change in governance just prior to construction. The property will probably not transfer ownership, but will have a new managing administration. Therefore, design review procedures will not be affected.

**Action:** **The Commission appreciates the comprehensive presentation and makes the following comments. The Commission:**

- recommends that the design guidelines address the historic context of the waterfront as well as the scale, rhythm, and continuity of the pier shed forms,
- encourages further development of east|west connections, improved circulation, and integration of the waterfront with the rest of downtown, and
- supports the continued development of the project based on urban design principles.

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031899.2      Project: **BINMIC Neighborhood Plan, Wallingford Neighborhood Plan**  
                  Phase: Briefing  
          Presenters: Susan Dehlendorf, Department of Neighborhoods  
          Attendees: Mark Johnson, Design, Construction & Land Use  
          Time: .75 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00039)

In response to the Neighborhood Planning efforts, the Neighborhood Matching Fund has been tripled and the Department of Neighborhoods has designated Neighborhood Development Managers to develop sector work plans for all of the combined neighborhood plans in each sector. The Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing/Industrial Center (BINMIC) and Wallingford Neighborhood Plans are two of eight neighborhood plans in the northwest sector of Seattle.

The BINMIC Plan was the first neighborhood plan to be completed and approved by City Council. Its goals, policies and required elements have been incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan; the plan has been recognized by resolution, and a work plan has been established for City agencies to accomplish actions recognized in the BINMIC plan. The BINMIC Plan focuses primarily on transportation issues such as water access, turning radii, traffic flow, and truck access, as well as economic development. The plan includes requests for paving of non-arterial streets, maintenance of Elliott Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West as a freight corridor, and increased signalization and traffic flow efficiency.

The Wallingford Neighborhood Plan has been completed, validated by the community, and was adopted by City Council in November of 1998. "The Wallingford community especially values the small, locally owned businesses that line the primary shopping district along N 45th Street. Several plan elements examine and recommend steps to be taken to insure its continued economic vitality, and enhance its position as the heart of a "small town in the big city." These recommendations, taken together, are perhaps the highest priority in the community. They include:

- Designate the Wallingford Urban Village. Provide viable commercial space in all new developments in commercial zones.
- Engineering and signage improvements on N 50th Street and N 45th pull fast through traffic onto the N. 50th Corridor leave other traffic with a more leisurely pace on 45th.
- Expediting a linked series of modest 45th Street corridor enhancements to encourage pedestrian activity, transit access, and bicycles.
- The 45th Street placemaking project to create an urban plaza at Wallingford and N 45th.
- Steps to increase the cohesiveness, identity and vitality of the 45th St. Business District.
- A parking management association to share parking resources along N 45th St. to solve a critical problem in the business district.
- Explore a business improvement association (BIA) to increase Chamber of Commerce viability, visibility and health.
- Develop commercial design-review guidelines."

From <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/npo/plans/wallford/wallhome.htm>)

The plan also includes residential traffic calming devices and a community center with library and meeting space as well as volunteer organization headquarters. The City Council and the community requested that the plan be amended in 1999 to include an element of multifamily housing in South Wallingford. Team Wallingford has begun addressing this issue.

Additional information regarding these and other neighborhood plans is available at the following web site address: [www.ci.seattle.wa.us/npo/nhoods.htm](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/npo/nhoods.htm)

**Discussion:**

- Foley:** Will the sector plans prioritize projects so that implementation opportunities can be coordinated and maximized?
- Dehlendorf:** That is our intention. However, we don't want to foster a feeling of competition within the sectors.
- Dubrow:** Often we review projects that include mitigation packages and developers don't know that Neighborhood Plans have identified amenities or potential projects. It would be helpful for developers to have information regarding how to include neighborhood projects in their mitigation packages. Is there an informative brochure or other tools that could list neighborhood projects?
- Dehlendorf:** Providing Neighborhood Plan information is important. Each Neighborhood Plan will have a set of design guidelines and standards for development. We will need to have good communication with Design Review Boards and the community. The Department of Neighborhoods will develop a database of Neighborhood Plans and recommendations with GIS ties.
- Dubrow:** The linkages may need to be strengthened even further. The information should be available when a developer is applying for permits. A list of Neighborhood Plan projects and recommendations should be provided at the permit office.
- Dehlendorf:** The BINMIC Neighborhood Planning group decided to spend some of their funding on an informative brochure.
- Dubrow:** The new DCLU Design Center is another location for providing Neighborhood Plan information to developers.
- Dehlendorf:** DCLU has been very involved in the development of Neighborhood Plans so there are already good connections to build upon.
- Walls:** Often we have developers that are looking at the Neighborhood Plans for implementation opportunities, but have trouble finding specific projects.
- Dehlendorf:** Each Neighborhood Plan has a different level of specificity. We are currently trying to help the planning groups to focus on continued implementation efforts by identifying one person responsible for facilitating the plan.
- Dubrow:** Will the Neighborhood Plans include urban design guidelines and preservation guidelines?
- Dehlendorf:** Some groups have proposed designating preservation districts. We are currently involved in policy level discussion regarding Neighborhood Plan implementation mechanisms. The design guidelines would feed into the Design Review process, which is set up to accommodate different sets of guidelines for various neighborhoods. Design Commission review of the Neighborhood Plan Design Guidelines may be appropriate.
- Hansmire:** The new ESA regulations may result in a diversion of funds to drainage related projects and the physical character of neighborhoods may be altered as a result of ESA implementation. I am concerned that the ESA implementation projects will focus on the scientific aspects without considering the larger context.
- Dubrow:** I sense that you have an understanding of what we are interested in reviewing.
- Dehlendorf:** Once the Neighborhood Development Managers have been selected and are in place, the plans will start to take shape.
- Action:** **The Commission appreciates the comprehensive briefing and looks forward to continued involvement with the Neighborhood Development Managers.**

031899.3      Project: **Downtown Wayfinding Demonstration Project, Public Restroom and Bus Shelter Improvements**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Jeff Bender, Seattle Transportation

Denna Cline, Office of the Mayor

Attendees: Sally Clark, Office of Councilmember Podlodowski

Kristian Kofoed, Design, Construction & Land Use

Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00005)

The Downtown Wayfinding Demonstration Project is scheduled for completion before the World Trade Convention in November, 1999. The project will be located in the First Avenue and Pike/Pine corridors. The demonstration project will include

- pedestrian signs for level one destination locations
- city maps for major districts
- international symbol signs
- information center signs
- parking signs; consolidation of signage in a couple of city blocks

The Wayfinding Demonstration Project is being coordinated with the Public Restroom and Bus Shelter Project.

#### **Discussion:**

**Batra:** How will the demonstration project be funded?

**Bender:** We have \$50,000 to develop designs, location plans, and other information. Production and installation will probably be funded by a variety of sources, including neighborhood grants, First & Goal streetscape improvement funds, and possibly state grants.

**Dubrow:** It makes sense to do a demonstration project. When the city-wide wayfinding project is funded, I strongly encourage allocating a fairly large amount of money to solving the neighborhood identity issue.

**Girvin:** Does the demonstration project include sign removal?

**Bender:** At the request of Mayor Schell, Seattle Transportation crews have begun the process of removing excess signs and repairing necessary signs.

**Girvin:** The removal of all non-essential signage in the demonstration project area is crucial for people to see the potential of the new system.

**Dubrow:** Have you developed a public outreach campaign? Before and after photographs of the area would be helpful in selling the idea to the public.

**Bender:** There isn't a public relations plan in place at this time. The project may be aired on channel 28. We are developing public surveys for comments on the project once it is complete. The neighborhood stakeholders group is well informed about the project and may provide additional public outreach.

**Foley:** Has a mechanism for evaluating the success of the project been developed?

**Bender:** The Seattle Transportation Communications Office will deal with the community response.

**Sundberg:** Will the new signage plan require installation of additional poles?

**Bender:** We plan to use existing poles wherever possible. There may be a need to add shorter, pedestrian scale poles in mid-block locations.

Seattle Transportation, the Department of Design, Construction & Land Use, the Strategic Planning Office, and the Department of Public Health have been cooperatively developing a proposal to install new public restrooms in downtown Seattle. Installation of these public restrooms would be funded through paid advertising on bus shelters, which requires a change in the Seattle Sign Code. The advertising displays would be limited to specifically defined areas on a limited number of bus shelters. City Council has not yet approved the Sign Code amendment that would allow advertising on the bus shelters to fund public restrooms.

**Discussion:**

**Dubrow:** I think the Commission is supportive of this project. Is it possible to center the code changes around arguments for major public amenities rather than public safety and health issues?

**Cline:** The major public amenities argument may not be as effective with the current sign code language. The public health and safety argument is more applicable.

**Dubrow:** The Commission currently links public urban design amenities with the Sign Code Special Exception rule for signs over 65 feet high.

**Cline:** We are trying to emphasize public safety and aesthetics in this sign code exception proposal.

**Hansmire:** Will the city propose a preferred design?

**Cline:** No, we plan to put out a Request For Proposals (RFP). Proposals will be evaluated on design quality, efficiency, and cost.

**Hansmire:** Who will maintain the shelters and restrooms?

**Cline:** METRO may oversee a maintenance contract for both shelters and restrooms. The restrooms may not be physically linked to the shelters. The two are only linked by a common goal of improving public health and safety.

**Dubrow:** The inclusion of public art in the advertising cases may make the exception more palatable.

**Cline:** A reduction of advertising space would equal a reduction in the number of public restrooms that we could afford. We will have to weigh the potential liabilities.

**Action:** **The Commission strongly supports the development of the Downtown Wayfinding Demonstration Project and appreciates the immediate efforts to reduce sign clutter in the downtown area.**

**The Commission supports the installation of public restrooms in the downtown. The Commission encourages continued efforts to include rotating public art projects in the restroom and shelter advertising displays.**



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031899.4      Project: **South Park, Fremont & Georgetown Neighborhood Plans**  
                  Phase: Briefing  
                  Presenters: Robert Scully, Department of Neighborhoods  
                  Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00039)

The South Park Neighborhood Plan includes the following key strategies:

- provide a full service library (highest priority),
- improve the 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South business area,
- improve current infrastructure,
- improve buffers between residential and industrial uses and along major highways, and
- annexation of a portion of unincorporated King County.

Other issues include ADA compliant access to the South Park Neighborhood Center Building, managed by the South Park Area Redevelopment Committee (SPARC). SPARC is interested in using the Early Implementation Fund for establishing a Neighborhood Resource Center, that could potentially be combined with a new library service.

The Fremont Neighborhood Plan includes the following key strategies:

- transportation: neighborhood circulation plan & traffic improvements,
- mosaic & Neighborhood Design Plan,
- a new community center, and
- improvements to the Fremont Troll and renaming of main access road.

The plan includes recommendations for development of the Wick Property (Slippery Slope) as a neighborhood open space with possible connections between 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenues South. The plan also recommends the provision of ADA compliant access to the Fremont Branch Library.

The Georgetown Neighborhood Planning Committee is discussing the following issues and preliminary recommendations:

- development of a community center at the Old City Hall building, currently a dental clinic and vacant space,
- a Georgetown Design District that is compatible with adjacent residential areas,
- open space for neighborhood use,
- provision of pedestrian and non-motorized access in the neighborhood,
- Georgetown Powerplant: access and viability,
- downtown Georgetown: small retail area near residential area,
- greenbelt or buffering at the north end of King County International Airport,
- traffic mitigation, and
- historic preservation, community identity, and the environment.

### **Discussion:**

**Girvin:** What is the Fremont mosaic concept?

**Scully:** The Mosaic concept is a “toolbox” approach to urban design that attempts to maintain the unique and diverse physical character of Fremont. The Mosaic would include a list of possible amenities or improvements available for developers to incorporate on-site or in the adjacent public right-of-way.

**Dubrow:** Could the improvements be located in the immediate vicinity or within a few block radius?

**Scully:** That is possible, the Mosaic concept will need further development after Neighborhood Planning.

**Dubrow:** This is an issue that the Commission is interested in.

- Scully:** It is a different approach and FUNC may need assistance in shaping it. The community desires to keep the funky character of Freemont by offering development choices. This is part of an overall attempt to make the Design Review process responsive to the unique character of Freemont.
- Dubrow:** Getting information to developers regarding neighborhood projects is very important. This briefing is helpful in getting a sense of the communities priorities.
- Scully:** The South Park and Georgetown Neighborhood Plans include recommendations that address the interface between industrial and residential land uses as well as inter-jurisdictional issues. The infrastructure in South Park is also an important issue and neighborhood identity, such as the “Hat and Boots”, are emerging issues for discussion.
- Action:** **The Commission appreciates the comprehensive briefing.**

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031899.5 Project: **Commission Business**

**Action Items:**

- A. MINUTES OF THE MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> MEETING: Approved as amended.

**Discussion Items:**

- B. CENTRAL AREA GATEWAY WORKSHOP: Commissioners Girvin, Layzer, and Sundberg attended the workshop with Commission staff. The workshop ultimately focused on transportation improvements. Other ideas generated at the workshop include a heritage trail and opportunities for neighborhood identification signage.
- C. LIGHT RAIL REVIEW PANEL UPDATE: Members of the LRRP reviewed a variety of alternatives for aerial guideways. LRRP staff are currently developing a LRRP Handbook that will outline the review phases and processes as well as the overall schedule. A series of milestone reviews, intended to provide a periodic review of the entire system and its commonalities, will also be included in the process.
- D. LINCOLN RESERVOIR: The community appealed the SEPA Declaration of Non-Significance (SEPA DNS) in the fall of 1998. The appeal has since been withdrawn. The project is currently undergoing review by the Seattle Landmarks Board.
- E. WSCTC EXPANSION PROJECT: The City Council has raised concerns regarding the WSCTC Expansion project. The City Council Transportation Committee will discuss the project on April 5<sup>th</sup> and the full Council will take a vote on April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- F. SUBCOMMITTEE FOR NMF PROJECTS: Commissioners Foley and Girvin will form a subcommittee to review two Neighborhood Matching Fund projects on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- G. CIVIC CENTER CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS: Commissioners will serve on the panel for a two-phase selection process.